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ABSTRACT

This list of resources for use in classrooms and media centers as well as for individual use describes a range of materials about preparing for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). It does not include every available resource, however. Only items submitted by publishers or vendors within a specified time period and that received positive evaluations overall are included. Resources were examined in terms of their: (1) stated purpose and success in achieving it; (2) coverage; (3) adequacy of content, format, and organization; (4) quality of supplementary material; (5) overall ease of use; (6) appropriate school uses; and (7) special weaknesses and strengths. Resources (i.e., books, activity cards, videocassettes, or computer courseware) are grouped into: whole-test resources; mathematics resources; verbal resources; Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) resources; and miscellaneous resources. A brief review of each resource is provided along with data concerning the respective author, title, price, publisher, publication date, order number, and other identifying characteristics. A directory of the publishers and producers of the resources is included. (SLD)

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# Preparation:

# *Selected Resources*

**April 1990**

**Media Evaluation Center**
**Division of Media and Technology Services**
**N. C. Department of Public Instruction**
**Bob Etheridge, State Superintendent**

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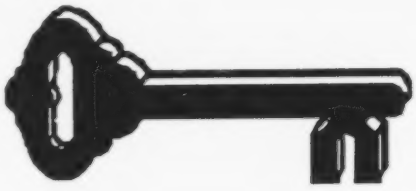
## FOREWORD

In support of and in response to the statewide emphasis on improving SAT scores, the Media Evaluation Center of the Division of Media and Technology Services has completed a special project to collect and provide an advisory list of instructional materials to assist local education agencies in preparing North Carolina's students for the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Several of the study panels involved in the Task Force on Excellence in Secondary Education have made recommendations designed to boost SAT scores, including the establishment of supplementary collections of computer software and practice books as well as the provision of test preparation courses. Many local systems have devised or are in the process of developing action plans for score improvement. Parents and community leaders also are interested in what they can do to improve scores on this important test.

SAT PREPARATION: SELECTED RESOURCES describes a range of materials to consider for use in classrooms and media centers as well as for special test preparation sessions, individual study, or parent information. The educational materials on this list are available for preview at the Media Evaluation Center. We encourage you to visit the Center to examine these SAT resources as well as the extensive collection of educational media that support your instructional programs and the competencies outlined in the Teacher Handbook of the Basic Education Program.

Bob Etheridge
State Superintendent



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The Media Evaluation Center gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Mike Frye in Communication Skills and Dr. Cleo Meek in Mathematics, who conducted information sessions on the Scholastic Aptitude Test and also evaluated materials. We also appreciate the contributions of regional consultants in communication skills and mathematics. Publishers, producers, and vendors also played an important role in this project by providing review copies of SAT resources.

## INTRODUCTION

This special project to create a list of resources on preparation for taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test was accomplished in two stages: the acquisition phase and the evaluation process. The Media Evaluation Center began the SAT project in the fall of 1989 by requesting that publishers and producers submit materials focusing on preparation for the SAT. The Center also identified items already in its review collection that pertained to the SAT.

While resources were arriving from publishers and producers, the Center's staff planned and organized the review process. Chief Consultant Vergie Cox invited Mike Frye of the DPI Communication Skills Section and Dr. Cleo Meek of the Mathematics Section to review materials and conduct information sessions for the Center's consultants on the SAT in general, its verbal and mathematics sections, and previous efforts (such as publications and workshops) from the State Department to advise educators throughout the state on ways to prepare students for the SAT. Regional consultants in math and communication skills also assisted in the review of materials. Consultants at the Media Evaluation Center examined more than one hundred items and prepared an evaluative critique of each one accepted for the list.

SAT PREPARATION: SELECTED RESOURCES is not intended to include every available item about the SAT. It is limited to those materials that were submitted by publishers or vendors within the specified time and that received positive evaluations. The SAT resources were examined in terms of their stated purpose and success in achieving it, coverage, adequacy of content, format and organization, quality of supplementary materials, overall ease of use, appropriate school uses, and special weaknesses and strengths. In some cases, reviewers found that an item accomplished its stated purpose admirably and identified no major weaknesses. In other cases, evaluators recommended items for use in certain situations despite some inherent or comparative weaknesses. The absence of weaknesses does not imply that an item is ideal for use in every situation. Nor does the presence of weaknesses mean that an item should not be purchased. Each item on the list received overall positive reviews from content specialists and Media Center consultants.

The selected resources exhibit a variety of purposes and formats. Obviously there is no one resource that will guarantee SAT success; the real solution requires a long-term commitment to educational excellence. In the meantime, however, students will benefit from test preparation and practice. SAT PREPARATION: SELECTED RESOURCES is designed to be a tool to assist North Carolina educators as they make decisions about which materials can best support local goals for SAT improvement.

# *Whole-Test Resources*

## WHOLE-TEST RESOURCES

Entries in this category prepare students for the whole SAT (both math and verbal sections) in a variety of ways. Some of these resources provide practice tests or furnish a brief overview to introduce or review the test. Other items are more comprehensive and include a combination of diagnostic tests, content review, general strategies and tactics for specific question types, practice problems, and simulated tests. Materials from the College Board provide the most authentic sample tests because they reproduce previously administered versions of the SAT while other publishers or producers typically create their own practice tests that parallel the format of but may not duplicate the content of the SAT.

### Books

Brownstein, Samuel C., et al. **BARRON'S BASIC TIPS ON THE SAT.** 5th ed. 391 p. $4.95 paper. Barron, 1989. (ISBN 0-8120-4186-0)

Barron's Basic Tips on the SAT is a compact version of the publisher's How to Prepare for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (also on this list). It provides general information about the test; description of the types of questions; a basic vocabulary list subdivided alphabetically (with a chart of prefixes, suffixes, and root words in each subdivision); commentary on math, verbal, and Test of Standard Written English sections (arranged by question type with brief content review, test-taking tips, and practice); and one full-length practice exam with explanatory answers. This version, which is the size of a mass market paperback book, provides shorter explanations, abbreviated strategies, and fewer practice examples than the more inclusive manual on which it is based.

WEAKNESSES: Math coverage is relatively brief. Particularly in the verbal sections, cluttered pages reduce visual appeal and mnemonic potential.

STRENGTHS: The size, scope, and portability of this item give it a manageable feel that will attract and motivate some students.

USES: Barron's Basic Tips on the SAT exposes students to the essentials but does not provide the depth of coverage furnished by more extensive guides. It is most useful for individuals who need general review or for the occasional student inclined to study on the go.

Brownstein, Samuel C., et al. **BARRON'S HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST.** 15th ed. 777 p. $9.95 paper. Barron, 1989. (ISBN 0-8120-4185-2)

How to Prepare for the Scholastic Aptitude Test is a study guide in five sections. "Organize Your Study Plan" contains an overview and description of the test with general strategies and three suggested plans for study (over ten weeks, two weeks, or two days). "Pinpoint Your Trouble Spots" includes a diagnostic test with explanatory answers and charts for

identification of weaknesses based on performance. "Tactics, Strategies, Practice" provides content review and practice. The verbal subsection presents tactics for taking the test, long-range strategies (such as making flashcards and reading broadly from a suggested reading list), and a vocabulary builder that includes lists of words appearing frequently on the SAT, basic words (3,500 entries and definitions), and word parts (prefixes, suffixes, and root words with meanings and examples). The math subsection covers standard multiple-choice questions (with tactics, a summary of facts and formulas, and practice problems with explanatory solutions), quantitative comparison (with tactics and special tips for inequalities), and a content review with practice exercises in arithmetic, algebra, and geometry. The Test of Standard Written English subsection includes tactics, explanation of common grammar and usage errors, and practice problems. "Test Yourself" includes seven full-length facsimile tests with explanatory answers. The final section offers tips for college admissions.

WEAKNESSES: The verbal section emphasizes an alphabetical word-list approach to vocabulary building from which only the most motivated students can benefit.

STRENGTHS: The scoring guide for the diagnostic test indicates specific weaknesses (for example, in analogies, inequalities, or fractions) as well as general performance on math or verbal sections. The three study plans make the book adaptable to several timetables. This source suggests some long-range learning strategies as well as short-term test-taking tactics.

USES: How to Prepare for the SAT is extensive enough to provide practice and review for students taking the test more than once. It is also a good resource for teachers who need information about the structure and types of questions on the test.

Carris, Joan Davenport, et al. **SAT SUCCESS: PETERSON'S STUDY GUIDE TO ENGLISH AND MATH SKILLS FOR COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS.** Rev. ed. 515 p. $9.95 paper. Peterson's Guides, 1987. (ISBN 0-87866-580-3) (Available from Bemar)

SAT Success offers a comprehensive study plan for strengthening knowledge and test-taking skills in preparation for the verbal, math, and TSWE sections of the SAT. Plans for study sessions of two, nine, and eighteen weeks are outlined. The portion of the book devoted to verbal preparation provides test-taking strategies, suggestions for answering each question type (analogy, antonym, sentence completion, and reading comprehension), and practice exercises for each. Guidance is also given for learning to be a better reader, with discussion of reading for the main point, for style and mood, for facts and examples, and for implications. A thorough review of roots and prefixes features lists and definitions of words from literary characters, myths and legends, names of people, and place names as well as foreign words and phrases used with English. Exercises accompany all these lists. A section on learning new vocabulary includes numerous word lists with definitions, sample sentences, and exercises. An extensive grammar review with exercises and quizzes is accompanied by tips for taking the Test of Standard Written English. The math section of the book begins with

test-taking hints and goes on to review basic arithmetic, polynomials, linear equations, inequalities, factoring, radicals and exponents, fractions, decimals, percentages, proportions, word problems, angles, polygons, circles, coordinate geometry, quantitative comparisons, data interpretation, and sequences. A final lesson in this section focuses on the hardest math problems typically found on an SAT. Practice exercises are given for all math topics discussed. Also included in the book are two mock SATs, a mock TSWE, a section of actual SAT questions for practice, and answer keys to all the exercises and quizzes.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: This book contains a significant amount of content review, practice, and sound test-taking advice presented in a clear, well-organized format.

USES: Serious students will find SAT Success a solid source of review and practice. They can pick and choose areas on which they most need to concentrate. The book's authors suggest using it in conjunction with either 5 SATs or 10 SATs in order to have experience with the real thing before taking the SAT and to have the most extensive preparation.

College Entrance Examination Board. **5 SATs.** 140 p. $7 paper. College Bd., 1989.

5 SATs contains five recent, released SATs, excluding the Test of Standard Written English and the unscored equating section. Each test is followed by a list of correct answers, a description of the SAT scoring process, directions for hand scoring the test, a scoring worksheet, and a score conversion table. Sample answer sheets are also included. An introductory section addresses a few specific topics such as why the test is given and what it measures, the content of the test, preparing for the test, the value of coaching courses, and recommendations from the College Board. This book does not provide strategies for taking the test.

WEAKNESSES: No explanatory material is provided along with the answers.

STRENGTHS: Because this book offers actual SATs, students have a good chance to find out exactly what taking the test is like. Having access to the answers can help students identify weaknesses in content knowledge.

USES: 5 SATs is a good resource for practice and assessment of strengths and weaknesses in content areas.

College Entrance Examination Board. **10 SATs: PLUS ADVICE FROM THE COLLEGE BOARD ON HOW TO PREPARE FOR THEM.** 3rd ed. 298 p. $9.95 paper. College Bd., 1988. (ISBN 0-87447-303-9)

10 SATs contains reprints of previously administered Scholastic Aptitude Tests with general information about and tips on taking the test. The

explanatory text is adapted from the College Board's Taking the SAT, which students receive when they apply to take the test. Most of the book consists of the ten different forms of the whole test. Each sample test includes an answer sheet, the test itself, answers, scoring instructions and worksheet, and a score conversion table. Scoring information for the first sample test includes a chart of answers and the percentage of students answering each question correctly.

WEAKNESSES: The book does not provide explanatory answers.

STRENGTHS: The advantage of this resource is its authenticity; students get a dose of "the real thing" (in terms of content and format) that should make them more confident and comfortable on SAT day.

USES: 10 SATs is a good source of full-length practice tests that could be used for "trial runs" under simulated exam conditions. These tests can also be used in whole or in part for assessment of problem areas or for extra practice by individual students.

Gruber, Gary R. **GRUBER'S COMPLETE PREPARATION FOR THE SAT: FEATURING CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS.** 3rd ed. 760 p. $9.95 paper. B&N Bks., 1988. (ISBN 0-06-463730-1) (Available from Har-Row)

Gruber's Complete Preparation for the SAT provides comprehensive review and practice in math and verbal areas with emphasis on thinking skills and test-taking strategies. It includes a diagnostic pretest, content review, seven full-length practice tests (with TSWE, answer keys, and explanatory answers), a practice test for the PSAT, and a section of easy-to-learn strategies for math and verbal questions. The verbal content review emphasizes vocabulary building through concentration on word roots, prefixes, and suffixes and a frequent word list (3400 entries). Readers construct individualized problem word lists based on performance on a series of short vocabulary tests. The math refresher contains five sections that review basic concepts, definitions, and procedures with examples and quizzes that are keyed to numbered subsections.

WEAKNESSES: The heavy marketing approach--with testimonials, cover blurbs, and trendy references to critical thinking--is tiresome. Vocabulary tests are in synonym rather than antonym format.

STRENGTHS: The book is easy to use. Students can pinpoint and review weak areas. Content coverage is thorough, and the book provides practice tests in SAT format.

USES: Gruber's Complete Preparation for the SAT is appropriate for independent use by motivated students, for course-length programs, or for teachers seeking familiarity with SAT content.

Martinson, Thomas H. **SUPERCOURSE FOR THE SAT**. 907 p. $12.95 paper. Arco, 1988. (ISBN 0-13-788506-7)

Supercourse for the SAT provides an overview of the test and a coaching program for each type of verbal question and the main math areas (arithmetic, algebra, and geometry, including regular multiple-choice questions and quantitative comparisons). The coaching section includes content review, test-taking strategies, examples with walk-through solutions, and drills with explanatory answers. The book also contains five full-length practice tests and a review of general math. Students take on test-detective roles paralleling Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, and the book uses margin icons for strategy, facts, common errors, and ladder of difficulty.

WEAKNESSES: No timetable or suggestions for schedule of use are provided.

STRENGTHS: This book contains excellent analysis of analogies. It shows students how to approach the ladder of difficulty used in most sections of the test, with different strategies for harder problems. Pages and material are uncluttered. The user-friendly format is motivating and may especially appeal to advanced students.

USES: Supercourse for the SAT is appropriate for students with good content knowledge or other students likely to be motivated by a detective framework.

**PREPARATION FOR THE SAT**. 8th ed. 642 p. $10.95 paper. Arco, 1989. (ISBN 0-13-700899-6)

Preparation for the SAT is a comprehensive guide to taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test. It begins with an overview of types of questions including those in the Test of Standard Written English (TSWE), a quick diagnostic test, and a full-length diagnostic examination with explanatory answers. It also provides content review, special strategies, and practice tests. The math review summarizes content of subskills (such as decimals or linear equations) and provides practice exercises with explained solutions. The verbal review contains diagnostic vocabulary quizzes and focuses on the etymological approach to vocabulary with instructions for building individualized word groups by making prefix, suffix, and root word flashcards. Students can then apply these skills to the book's SAT word list and to the practice exercises. The TSWE review provides drills and a grammar review. General strategies and special tactics for the mathematics and verbal questions appear in the "Test Buster" yellow pages. The book also includes six full-length practice tests with explanatory answers and a final practice test.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: This resource is a well-organized approach to the SAT with particularly strong explanatory answers and many practice opportunities. The introduction provides information about the college admissions process.

USES: Preparation for the SAT is a substantial volume that is most appropriate for individual students motivated to improve their overall test

performance. The practice tests (or parts of them) are a good source of additional problems for students who need extra drill. The "Test Buster" strategy pages add flexibility for review just before the test or for use by students who do not need to use the entire book.

**TAKING THE SAT: THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO THE SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST AND TEST OF STANDARD WRITTEN ENGLISH.** 64 p. $4 paper. College Bd., 1989.

Taking the SAT is a brief guide furnished by the College Board to students when they apply to take the test. It provides general information about the SAT, test-taking tips, explanation of the question types with typical problems and solutions, a short math content review, and a practice test (a previously administered SAT). This sample test includes the Test of Standard Written English but not the experimental equating section used to adjust future versions of the test.

WEAKNESSES: The booklet does not provide explanatory answers for the practice test.

STRENGTHS: This source offers a concise presentation of essential information.

USES: Taking the SAT provides basic information for any student planning to take the test. Other materials will be more helpful for identifying and boosting students' weak areas. This item offers a good final review shortly before the test.

Weber, Karl. **COMPLETE PREPARATION FOR THE SAT.** 430 p. $8.95 paper. Harcourt, 1986. (ISBN 0-15-601224-3) (Available from Follett Lib. Bk.)

Complete Preparation for the SAT presents extensive content review as well as strategy tips for both the verbal and math sections of the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Outlines for three study plans are presented, depending on whether students have six or more weeks, two to five weeks, or two weeks or less to devote to test preparation. Study begins with a pretest, a simulated SAT accompanied by an answer key, scoring instructions, a score conversion table, and explanatory answers. A discussion of test-taking strategies follows. Throughout the rest of the book content review (with practice problems) alternates with four other practice tests in SAT format. Topics covered include vocabulary building, reading comprehension, quantitative comparisons, word roots, antonyms, basic arithmetic, algebra, grammar review, analogies, sentence completion, and geometry.

WEAKNESSES: Although the table of contents is complete, users might find an index to be useful for this large book with its wide range of content. Answers for content area practice problems appear right under the group of problems and may distract some students from focusing on solving the problems.

STRENGTHS: This workbook contains more content review than some. Explanatory answers will help students understand their mistakes and improve their work. Organization of materials into a pattern of review and practice should be effective in reinforcing students' knowledge and building their confidence about taking the test.

USES: Complete Preparation for the SAT could be used as the basis for an SAT preparatory program. Teachers will find the content review sections helpful for working with groups. The book is also appropriate, useful, and of most value to highly motivated students willing to spend many weeks arming themselves for the test.

Weber, Karl. **POCKET GUIDE TO THE SAT.** 211 p. $6.95 paper. Harcourt, 1985. (ISBN 0-15-672186-4) (Available from Follett Lib. Bk.)

Pocket Guide to the SAT is a concise yet informative approach to preparing for the Scholastic Aptitude Test. It begins with a general description of the test and then explains the types of questions found in the math and verbal sections as well as the Test of Standard Written English. Overall strategies for approaching the test-taking experience are presented as are particular strategies for dealing with specific question types. This guide's unique feature is the running commentary offered in the first of its two practice tests modeled on the SAT. Suggestions, hints, and reminders appear down the outside column of each page of the test. The second test provides hints only for the most difficult questions. Scoring instructions, an answer key, a score conversion table, and explanatory answers accompany each test.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: Explanatory answers are a boon to students seeking to identify weak points in content knowledge. The commentary in the first practice test is especially valuable in helping students understand the thinking skills and processes needed to answer different types of questions. This book does a good job of presenting sound advice and practical information in a thoroughly approachable format with visual appeal and clearly written text.

USES: Students who find large workbooks somewhat intimidating and discouraging should respond well to Pocket Guide to the SAT. It can be used effectively over a relatively short period of time and still provide the reassurance that comes from practice and foreknowledge of the character of the test. This book would be especially appropriate for students who do not need extensive content review.

## Book (Workbook)

Friedman, Herbert, and Sharon L. Zuber. **DOING YOUR BEST ON THE SAT.** 3rd ed. 64 p. (with answer key and instructor's manual) $6 paper. Medford Pr., 1987. (ISBN 0-9606824-4-9)

Doing Your Best on the SAT was designed by faculty at the College of William and Mary for use in test preparation courses. A teacher's manual with specific suggestions for presenting the material and an answer key accompany the main booklet. This item emphasizes strategies for approaching different kinds of questions and making educated guesses and capitalizes on its intended use in a group setting to reduce students' text anxiety.

WEAKNESSES: The authors state that some items are easier than the average SAT question in order to focus on specific strategies. The plain format of the publication reduces its appeal.

STRENGTHS: For teachers, this resource is practical and easy to use. For students, it provides information to demystify the test and boost confidence in test taking.

USES: Doing Your Best on the SAT was created for use in preparation courses in a six- to twelve-hour time frame over two to five sessions. Teachers may want to locate additional practice problems in students' weak areas. (Note: A fourth edition, 1990, is now available at no increase in cost.)

## Computer Courseware

**BARRON'S COMPUTER STUDY PROGRAM FOR THE SAT, SECOND EDITION.** 6 program disks, guide 147 p. $49.95. Barron, 1989. Systems: Apple II family, IBM-PC. Equipment required: microcomputer, 1 disk drive, monitor, printer (preferred)

Barron's Computer Study Program for the SAT, Second Edition helps students prepare for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). The introductory disk presents a general overview of the SAT and suggests strategies for solving problems on the test. The program explains how the test is scored and when to guess or skip questions. Students take a diagnostic test on content found in the verbal and mathematics sections of the SAT. The program provides a detailed analysis of performance and a prioritized list of objectives for study. This list guides students to the segments of the program where they should concentrate their efforts. Practice disks present questions from verbal, mathematical, and Test of Standard Written English sections of the SAT. Verbal section disks cover vocabulary, reading comprehension, grammar, and composition. The mathematical sections test ability to use number concepts, apply fundamental mathematical skills, and solve geometry and algebra problems. Two simulated SAT tests allow practice in taking timed tests. On all practice disks and tests, students can work in a timed mode that simulates a test or in a practice mode that provides instant feedback. In the timed mode students answer questions and move immediately to the next question until they reach the end of the section.

Students can skip questions and return to them later in either mode. After completing the test, students receive an SAT-style score and a detailed analysis of their performance on specific objectives. The practice mode informs students whether their answers are right or wrong as soon as they are entered. Incorrect answers prompt the program to give a hint. After a correct answer, the program explains why it was correct. A pacing timer on the screen helps students develop a sense of how much time to spend on individual questions and sections of the test. The program provides a running tally of the number of correct versus incorrect responses for each practice section. The guide contains an overview of the program and recommends study habits to adopt while preparing for the test. It also outlines three possible approaches to studying: a two-day crash program, a two-week concentrated review, and a ten-week comprehensive review. The guide suggests strategies and methods of answering, or not answering, test questions. A detailed description of the content of each section, vocabulary words that commonly appear on the test, prefixes and root words, basic math facts, formulas, and information are also included in the guide.

WEAKNESSES: Diagrams, charts, and other graphics needed to answer questions do not appear on the screen. Instead, all graphics are located in the user's guide. The on-screen timer does not take into account the time needed to read comprehension passages. Students may get the impression that they should be able to read and comprehend a passage in a few seconds. Questions in all tests and practice segments of the program appear in exactly the same format and order each time students use the program.

STRENGTHS: The program provides a detailed study plan listing the sections of the SAT users most need to study. The instant feedback and explanations of the simulated tests and practice disks will help students become familiar with the types of questions and content appearing on the SAT. Except in the reading comprehension passages, the program's timer will help students learn to budget time for answering questions.

USES: Barron's Computer Study Program for the SAT, Second Edition familiarizes students with the format of that test and the pre-SAT. If the recommended times are followed, students become conditioned to taking timed tests. Most significantly, the program provides a comprehensive, personalized study plan for students interested in improving their test scores. The program will not help students who do not know the content covered by the test since no attempt is made to teach content. The program focuses on how to solve problems using existing knowledge.

**ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR THE SAT.** 3 program disks, 1 management disk, quick reference sheet, "Progress Chart," guide 16 p. $79. Natl. Assn. Principals, 1989. Systems: Apple II family, IBM-PC. Equipment required: microcomputer, 1 disk drive, monitor (color preferred), printer (optional)

Essential Skills for the SAT provides practice exams, explanatory answers, and score analyses to prepare students for the verbal, mathematics, and standard written English (TSWE) components of the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Test questions in the program parallel the scope and content of the SAT. The program's verbal section includes anatomy, analogy, sentence completion, and reading comprehension questions. Math examples pertain to arithmetic,

geometry, and algebra. The segment on standard written English presents usage and sentence correction items. For any of the three types of sample tests, students work in either the tutorial or test mode, each of which includes sixty questions in two parts for math, two forty-question sections for verbal, and fifty questions for the TSWE. In the tutorial mode students receive immediate feedback for each test question, including the correct response, a rationale or procedure for obtaining it, and appropriate hints or test-taking strategies. The test mode is timed, and students receive no feedback until they have completed a test. At that point they can use the explanation mode to see the correct answer with optional clarification for each question, for each question missed, or for any selected question number(s). They can also select a score analysis feature that displays the total number of questions; the number correct, incorrect, and skipped; raw and converted scores; and a similar breakdown for each type of question such as antonym or geometry. Students can print their score analyses or record them manually on the program's "Progress Chart." A management disk enables teachers to save student work on partially finished tests, display a list of student names for which records are available, or print detailed records for selected students. The package contains a quick reference sheet, a reproducible progress chart, and a user's manual that introduces the program and describes the menu, function keys, and other options.

WEAKNESSES: The program presents the same questions in the same order for both the test and tutorial modes. Figures for geometry problems are displayed in the guide rather than on the screen. The "Progress Chart" leaflet breaks each type of question down into subcategories (such as specific subject areas for reading comprehension passages). The program itself, however, does not utilize the subcategories to help diagnose weaknesses in these areas.

STRENGTHS: The program exposes students to the types and formats of questions they will encounter on the SAT. Explanatory feedback is excellent in terms of provision of problem-solving models, accessibility, and design features such as screen windows and the use of color or highlighting.

USES: Essential Skills for the SAT is appropriate for individual student use. The test mode is helpful as a diagnostic tool. The tutorial mode provides guided practice in the target content areas for the SAT. Although the program does not address systematic skill development, teachers or students can use the score analyses to develop individualized study plans.

**TESTWISE: PREPARING FOR THE SAT.** 9 program disks, 25 copies of the SAT, 25 student manuals 23 p. each, 1 counselor manual 23 p. $195. College Bd., 1987. Systems: Apple II family, IBM. Equipment required: microcomputer, 2 disk drives, monitor (color optional), printer (optional)

Testwise: Preparing for the SAT uses on-screen tutorials, practice items, minitests, and an actual recent SAT to prepare students for the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The package contains nine disks: an introductory disk, one disk for each of the six types of SAT questions, a scoring disk, and a data storage disk. The introductory disk explains what to expect on the SAT, how to prepare for and take the test, and how to use this program. Especially

helpful are the test-taking tips about pacing and guessing. The introductory disk also includes a sampler of test items that ascertain where students should begin the program. The question disks cover the six question types: antonyms, sentence completion, analogies, reading comprehension, regular math, and quantitative comparisons. Each question disk contains four parts: a step-by-step explanation of how to approach the particular type of question; easy, medium, and difficult practice items along with explanations for right and wrong answers; minitests of varying difficulty; and a tips/review section that summarizes and reviews the content of the disk. After sufficient practice with the question disks, students take the paper-and-pencil SAT provided in the package (this test does not include the Equating Section or the Test of Standard Written English). Using the scoring disk students then enter their answers into the computer. Responses and scores are saved on the student disk by name and, for privacy, under a password. The disk holds records for up to 500 students. In addition to explaining how scores are calculated, the scoring disk displays or prints students' percentile scores, their performance on each type of question, and their performance on questions of different difficulty. Students also learn strategies for improving their scores. The student manual contains explanatory material, a planning chart for working through the program, a blank scheduling chart, tips for each type of question, and a sampler of test questions. The counselor manual explains how to introduce the program, motivate students to use it, administer the practice test, and interpret test results.

WEAKNESSES: The program is more a tutorial than drill and practice, offering relatively few practice problems and no additional practice when students miss a problem. At times the execution on the screen is slow, and students may become annoyed waiting for the next screen to appear.

STRENGTHS: Testwise: Preparing for the SAT offers valid questions and reliable information about the SAT. Several features of the program should help students improve their scores, including the strategies for answering each type of question, the explanations of both incorrect and correct answer choices, and the analysis of scores.

USES: Motivated students will benefit from this package. Students should first complete the introductory disk. Because each question disk can be used separately, different students can work on different sections of the program at the same time. Moreover, students can choose the part of each disk--explanation, practice, test, or review--that suits their needs at the time. Additional copies of the SAT and student manuals can be purchased from the producer.

## Videocassette

**A VIDEO ON TAKING THE SAT.** 1 videocassette 15 min. VHS $29.95. College Bd., 1989.

A Video on Taking the SAT provides a brief (approximately fifteen-minute) orientation to the Scholastic Aptitude Test by portraying three students with different attitudes towards and knowledge about the exam. One male

student is articulate, informed, and confident about the test. The other boy is hesitant and does not know how to approach the test. The girl would rather listen to music and pretend she knows more than she does. At the end, all are more informed about the test and how they can prepare for it. The video features interactions among the students, comment from test makers, visual presentation of problems and solutions for each type of verbal and math question, and general strategies for success.

**WEAKNESSES:** Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

**STRENGTHS:** This video offers a human dimension to the SAT that will appeal to and motivate students, who will identify with the foibles of the characters on the screen while learning essential information about the test.

**USES:** A Video on Taking the SAT is especially appropriate for introductory group sessions. It could be used during the school day, in special preparation programs, for individual review, or at parent information sessions.

# *Mathematics Resources*

## MATHEMATICS RESOURCES

These resources concentrate on mathematical skill areas that are reflected in the SAT. Some of the materials advocate a long-range approach with activities that can be integrated into the content area classroom. Content area approaches tend to provide other types of practice exercises (such as matching) in addition to those in SAT format.

### Activity Cards

**SAT MATHEMATICS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.** Note: Disseminated by the Mathematics Section, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1987, 1988, and 1989. Distributed to high schools through teachers who attended regional workshops on the SAT.

The SAT Mathematics Improvement Project offers support for teachers and practice for students in preparing for the mathematics portion of the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The instructor's guide contains an overview booklet that includes instructions for using project materials, description of project components, an answer key for the pretest (a released PSAT) with a score conversion table, suggestions for using the materials with students, an outline of content tested on the PSAT, explanation and examples of the different content items covered on the test, and a chart of frequency distribution of math content by levels of difficulty and thinking. A section of general information for teachers in the overview provides suggestions for classroom teaching, description of the test's makeup, an example of directions for quantitative comparison questions, and notes on how to help students prepare for the math exam. Also in the overview are a chart showing average college grades for students with particular SAT scores, a graph showing the effect of coaching time on SAT scores, and a list of other resources. The guide also includes a released PSAT and answer sheet; diagnostic tests in arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and problem solving; solution keys for the diagnostic tests; and student practice booklets and answer sheets in each area. The teacher card file contains individual index cards with single questions (from SATs and PSATs) on the front and brief explanatory answers on the reverse side. Cards are divided into subject area (arithmetic, algebra, and geometry) and subdivided into topics (e.g., percents and number theory) and difficulty levels (easy, medium, and hard). Cards are color coded according to thinking level.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: This project is well organized and clearly presented. Its greatest asset is its flexibility: it can be adapted to use in small chunks of time over a long period to provide students with enough practice and depth of study to increase their knowledge of content, not just strategies.

USES: The SAT Mathematics Improvement Project can be used as the focus of a review course for the SAT or as independent study. The wisest use of these flexible materials would be made by following the suggestions given for incorporating them into regular classroom sessions over a long period of time.

## Book

Rich, Barnett. **MATHEMATICS FOR THE COLLEGE BOARDS.** 2nd ed. 437 p. $8.75 paper. Amsco Sch., 1987. (ISBN 0-87720-200-1)

Mathematics for the College Boards focuses on the content and types of problems on the SAT and also discusses features of the test. It provides a preview of problems, content review sections (in the areas of arithmetic, signed numbers, monomials, and polynomials; equations and inequalities; problem solving; ratios and proportions; geometry; roots and radicals; areas and volumes; circles and cylinders; graphs; special topics; and quantitative comparison), and model SAT math tests with explanatory answers or answer keys. Each section provides an overview of problems to be covered, definitions and vocabulary, short matching tests, and numerous practice problems. The user's guide in the front of the book provides facts about the SAT, major test-taking tips, and planning tables for grades nine through twelve and for grades seven and eight.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: This guide is well organized with clear illustrations and diagrams. Its approach is flexible and easily adaptable for diagnostic or prescriptive use and in individual or group situations.

USES: Mathematics for the College Boards is useful for motivated students. An instructor could also use this material for a SAT preparation class (either a short session or full-length course).

## Book (Workbook)

Comras, Jay, and Jeffrey Zerowin. **IMPROVING COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST SCORES: SAT MATHEMATICS.** student's workbook 152 p. $5.75 paper (ISBN 0-88210-148-X). teacher's manual 142 p. $10.50 paper (ISBN 0-88210-149-8). Natl. Assn. Principals, 1983.

Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Mathematics focuses on review of math concepts and also provides test-taking information and practice. The workbook includes a glossary of mathematical terms, a summary of formulas and properties, twelve skill sections, five simulated math exams, and one full-length simulated math exam. Skill sections cover number theory; fractions; ratio, proportion, and percents; order of operations; factors, exponents, and roots; equations; inequalities; word problems; angle measurement; triangles; circles; and perimeter, area, and volume. Each skill section provides appropriate definitions and terms, sample exercises with explained solutions, and review problems (in both multiple choice and quantitative comparison format). Six matching quizzes scattered through the skill sections provide additional reinforcement. The five simulated math exams are thirty-minute timed tests. The teacher's manual provides general guidelines on the SAT and on using the workbook, specific teaching tips for concepts encountered in the practice problems, answers to the review and matching exercises, and answer keys (with explanatory answers for two tests) for the simulated examinations.

**WEAKNESSES:** Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

**STRENGTHS:** Problems range from easy to difficult. Solutions to the sample problems outlined for students offer hints (such as sketching a problem situation), strategies, and step-by-step frameworks. The manual offers alternative or intuitive solutions to help teachers boost students' problem-solving skills.

**USES:** Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Mathematics can be integrated into the math classroom when particular topics are covered or used for review by individual students with teacher guidance. This resource is particularly useful in a test preparation course because the manual provides a high level of teacher support.

# *Verbal Resources*

## VERBAL RESOURCES

These resources concentrate on verbal skill areas that are emphasized in the SAT. Some of the materials advocate a long-range approach with activities that can be integrated into the content area classroom. Content area approaches tend to provide other types of practice exercises (such as matching or word analysis charts) in addition to those in SAT format.

### Activity Cards

**SAT VERBAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.** Note: Disseminated by the Communication Skills Section, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1988. Distributed to high schools through teachers who attended regional workshops on the SAT.

The SAT Verbal Improvement Project is a study program to be used in preparation for the verbal portion of the SAT. The project notebook offers explanatory information and practice materials. An overview contains general information about the verbal portion of the SAT, analysis of the four types of test items (antonyms, analogies, sentence completion, and reading comprehension), discussion of the six levels of higher order thinking skills, tips for teaching students how to improve their verbal skills as they relate to the SAT, a model lesson for reading comprehension, strategies for using these study materials, suggestions for principals, and a summary for parents. Directions are given for using two released PSATs for a pretest and posttest, including instructions for converting the pretest score to a comparable SAT score. Practice booklets for grades nine, ten, and eleven feature questions from actual SATs and PSATs for antonyms, analogies, sentence completion, and reading comprehension. These segments of the notebook also describe the different test items, how to prepare for them, and useful strategies for answering the questions. The appendix provides an evaluation chart of other SAT preparation materials (including software), a bibliography, suggestions for using the activity cards, transparency masters for use in reading comprehension practice, answer sheets for the pretest and posttest, a class summary sheet, score conversion tables, and a released PSAT. Activity cards are separated by question type (antonyms, analogies, and sentence completion) and divided into the subject areas of social studies, fine arts, English, and science. Each card features a question on the front and the answer, level of difficulty, and content area on the reverse side.

WEAKNESSES: These project materials were adapted from a program developed by South Carolina's Department of Education, and there are some inconsistencies between the original materials and changes made by the North Carolina DPI (e.g., the instruction sheet for the activity cards refers to four colors of cards when in this case there are only three colors). Users may notice a few editing errors in the introductory pages.

STRENGTHS: Sound advice, thorough explanations, and useful strategies distinguish this set of materials. The point is strongly made that preparation for the SAT is not something that can be done at the last minute and that verbal skills must be emphasized across the curriculum throughout a

young person's education. Practice questions offer students an opportunity to become familiar and at ease with the test format, and the activity cards encourage independent study. Flexibility of use strengthens the overall value of these materials.

USES: The SAT Verbal Improvement Project is especially suited to brief periods of study over a long period of time although it could certainly serve as the basis for a review course. Organization and content of materials lend them to effective use in other classes besides English, reinforcing the idea that superior verbal skills rest on a broad base of knowledge.

## Book

Christ, Henry I. **ENGLISH FOR THE COLLEGE BOARDS.** 426 p. $8.50 paper. Amsco Sch., 1987. (ISBN 0-87720-687-2)

English for the College Boards focuses on improving students' vocabulary and reading comprehension skills and provides practice tests that parallel the verbal portion of the SAT. Vocabulary sections deal with several kinds of context clues, word clues, word analysis (with roots, prefixes, and suffixes), and analogies. Reading comprehension sections cover finding the main idea, making inferences, identifying details, and understanding the author's attitude and style. Within the vocabulary or comprehension sections there are trial tests, sample problems with modeled thinking strategies, practice exercises, review tests, and summaries. Also included are diagnostic tests for vocabulary and reading comprehension as well as five facsimile tests (with explained answers for three of the tests and answer keys for the other two). A teacher's guide leaflet offers general suggestions and study plans for lessons in each of grades nine through twelve.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: This item gives students a repertoire of methods for increasing their vocabularies and for attacking the kinds of problems they will encounter on the SAT. Students are encouraged to build on what they know rather than memorize vocabulary lists. The book also provides review of reading skills that will help many secondary students in daily life or work as well as on the SAT.

USES: English for the College Boards is most appropriate when integrated into regular English classroom programs well in advance of the SAT. This is a rich and flexible approach that enhances verbal and test-taking skills.

## Books (Workbooks)

Carris, Joan Davenport. **PETERSON'S SUCCESS WITH WORDS.** 384 p. $9.95 paper. Peterson's Guides, 1987. (ISBN 0-87866-536-6)

The workbook Success With Words is designed to help students increase and broaden their vocabulary as well as raise their verbal scores on standardized tests. Exercises (including the usual array of such formats as multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, and short answer) cover a wide variety of topics (for instance, Latin and Greek roots, number roots, prefixes, synonyms and antonyms, French words frequently used in English, words with a negative connotation, legal terms, words from myth and legend, scientific terms, and psychological and medical terms). Although this workbook, like most, contains more practice than explanation, a good amount of direction and instruction is given. One unit focuses specifically on answering the verbal questions on the PSAT and SAT. This section provides techniques for getting right answers, advice on budgeting time, facts about the PSAT and SAT, suggestions for answering analogy questions, approaches to answering antonym questions, techniques for handling sentence completion questions, and strategies for answering questions on reading passages. Practice sections accompany the descriptions of each question type. The workbook also includes an extensive reading list of enjoyable books (in support of the idea that reading is the most important activity for strengthening vocabulary), answer keys for all the practice activities, an index of words taught or referred to frequently, and a key to abbreviations and symbols.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: The organization and strategies used in each section on words (understanding them in context; specific word study that includes a definition, sample uses, relatives, and synonyms; root study; and exercises in use) are effective and educationally sound. The general tone of the explanatory material is lively and appealing. Overall division of the vocabulary study into specific word groups provides added interest along with significant, functional learning segments. Frequent review sections reinforce learning.

USES: Success With Words can be used most effectively on a long-term basis for a general strengthening of vocabulary and during a shorter period for specific practice with the types of questions that appear on the verbal portion of the PSAT and SAT.

Comras, Jay, and Jeffrey Zerowin. **IMPROVING COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST SCORES: SAT VERBAL.** Rev. ed. student's workbook 172 p. $5.75 paper (ISBN 0-88210-135-8). teacher's manual 105 p. $10.50 paper (ISBN 0-88210-136-6). Natl. Assn. Principals, 1982, 1988.

Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Verbal emphasizes boosting verbal skills through five extended lessons designed for classroom use with

instructional support from the teacher's manual. This resource also includes two simulated Tests of Standard Written English and a simulated SAT verbal examination. Each lesson starts with a shortened practice test and continues with skill builders in reading comprehension (with passages on topics in the social studies, sciences, and humanities), sentence completion, or analogies. Most of each lesson is devoted to vocabulary building based on key prefixes, suffixes, and root words exemplified in words arranged in groups (e.g., "Human Relations," "World of Practical Affairs," or "Science Related"). The lessons provide several types of exercises that review the words and their component parts. Students then complete word analysis charts (by providing root words, prefixes, suffixes, literal meanings, definitions, synonyms and antonyms) for different words that contain the newly learned root words and affixes. Each lesson concludes with more exercises (on meanings, antonyms, and sentence completion) and a vocabulary check test (with antonyms, analogies, and placing words in sentence contexts). The teacher's manual provides an orientation to the test, using the materials, and motivating students and an overview of reading comprehension, vocabulary study, and teaching procedures. For each lesson, the guide contains teaching notes and a detailed plan with an introduction, explanations of answers for tests and skill builders, and a focus on a particular test-taking strategy.

WEAKNESSES: Sentence completion exercises are not generally as complex as those on the SAT.

STRENGTHS: This resource is designed for use in a school setting and provides excellent support with a teacher's manual that is clear, thorough, and easy to use. The workbook presents effective methods of vocabulary development such as word analysis and subject area word groups and also provides several kinds of practice problems in addition to the SAT-type questions.

USES: Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Verbal can be integrated into the regular English curriculum but is most suitable for use in a separate test preparation program. The lessons are also available in a videocassette version (reviewed in this list).

## Computer Courseware

**WORD ATTACK PLUS!** 1 program/data disk, 1 back-up disk, guide 50 p. $59. Davidson and Assocs., 1988. Systems: Apple II family, IBM PC, IBM PS/2, Tandy 1000. Equipment required: microcomputer, 1 disk drive (2 preferred), monitor (color optional), printer (preferred). Additional data disks: SAT Prep and Roots and Prefixes ($19.95 each)

Word Attack Plus! is a vocabulary development program with 750 words sorted into ten levels, providing one level for each of grades four through eight and five levels for grades nine through twelve and SAT preparation. Working through a series of pull-down menus, users choose a word level, one of three groups of twenty-five words from that level (nouns, adjectives, or verbs), and one of five activities. "Word Display" familiarizes users with a word list by presenting each word, a brief definition, and a sentence using the

word in context. "Multiple Choice Quiz" gives students the option of selecting from a group of definitions for a given word or from a group of words for a given definition. "Sentence Completion" displays a definition as a clue and a sentence with the defined word missing. Students must enter the vocabulary word spelled correctly. Requesting a hint brings a list of word possibilities to the screen. "Word Match" presents the words and definitions in such a way that only some of the words are available at a time for matching with the definitions, which are readily retrievable. The final option, "Word Attack Plus," is an arcadelike game in which students must match one of four word possibilities with a definition. Records can be printed and/or saved for all activities except "Word Display." Teachers can expand the number of words available for practice by adding word lists, definitions, and sentences to data disks they create. The guide explains how to operate the program and lists all the words in each level. Additional data disks may also be purchased to use with all five activities provided on the program disk. The SAT Prep data disk includes twenty lists of twenty-five words that were selected, according to the producer, from lists of high frequency words found in SAT preparation guides. The Roots and Prefixes disk contains five lists of either roots or prefixes, each entry naming the root or prefix, giving its definition, and providing a sentence with a word using that root or prefix. Each of these five lists is followed by three word lists with entries that provide a word using the root or prefix, a definition, and a sample sentence.

WEAKNESSES: None of these activities presents word practice in the format found on the SAT exam. The guide assumes that users of the IBM PS/2 version are familiar with their equipment. There are no directions for activating the mouse, and directions for entering path names for user-created disks might confuse novices. The Roots and Prefixes disk contains several spelling errors and a pronoun-antecedent agreement error.

STRENGTHS: Students have the opportunity to interact with the same words in a variety of challenging ways, increasing the likelihood of longer practice sessions with a group of words and better retention.

USES: Last-minute memorizing of vocabulary words is not recommended as an effective way to prepare for the SAT. However, used months or years before the exam, Word Attack Plus! will help users gain exposure to new words. These activities are meant to complement vocabulary learning that results from extensive reading and listening. Users should be aware that the structure of the program dictates that only one meaning is used for each word even if multiple meanings exist and that even though more than one word might be possible for the "Sentence Completion" segment, the program accepts only a particular word from the word list being used.

## Flashcards

Lederer, Richard, and Deborah Bentley Boettiger. **SAT VOCABULARY FLASH CARDS.** 500 cards (2" x 4 1/2"), student guide (46 p.) $13.25. Amsco Sch., 1987. (ISBN 0-87720-669-4)

SAT Vocabulary Flash Cards are five hundred in number and accompanied by a guide for students. Each card presents a single word, its part(s) of

speech, its pronunciation, and related forms on one side and its definition and a sentence using the word on the reverse side. The words were chosen from the 530 words most frequently appearing on 25 SATs studied by the authors, and cards are arranged in order of frequency of appearance. The guide includes sections on using the flashcards, getting ready for the SAT, improving scores on each section of the verbal portion of the SAT, getting through the test, and building a better vocabulary. Sample tests in SAT format on antonyms, analogies, and sentence completion also appear in the guide along with a pronunciation key and an alphabetical word list that serves as an index to the vocabulary cards (cards are numbered from 1 to 500).

WEAKNESSES: Content of the guide is rather slim, and these materials will appeal to only the most motivated students.

STRENGTHS: The cards are easy to use and quite portable. Students can individualize their vocabulary studies by removing words they already know or adding cards.

USES: SAT Vocabulary Flash Cards are appropriate for use by individuals or study partners. If used consistently and persistently over a period of time, they can help students enrich their vocabularies.

## Videocassettes

**IMPROVING COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST SCORES: SAT VERBAL.** 6 videocassettes each 60 min. VHS $250. student's workbook 172 p. $5.75 paper (ISBN 0-88210-135-8). teacher's manual 105 p. $10.50 paper (ISBN 0-88210-136-6). Natl. Assn. Principals, 1982.

Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Verbal consists of videotapes that correspond to the five lessons presented in the student workbook of Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Verbal. The workbook and teacher's manual must be purchased separately. Each videotape is approximately fifty-eight minutes long with a format that combines teacher presentation; fine arts, drawings, or cartoons with text overlays; classical or popular music; and other sound effects, visual images, and text displays. The set includes an orientation tape and one tape for each of the five lessons. Students complete workbook activities before viewing each tape. The teacher's manual provides guidelines for using the workbooks with and without the videotapes. The suggested instructional sequence is slightly different for videotapes. On each tape students view an introduction and review answers to exercises in the workbook (the Vocabulary Check test, related concepts in the Skill Builder section, and the simulated verbal exam).

WEAKNESSES: The fifty-eight-minute tapes are rather long for convenient use or sustained interest in most single-class sessions. Screen images in the review copy were slightly blurred. Legibility is reduced by the use of only uppercase text and by the superimposition of text on pictures, which often produces a cluttered effect.

STRENGTHS: The videocassettes offer a change of pace in presentation that will motivate some students and appeal to different learning styles. Art, music, and etymology provide an interdisciplinary context for building verbal skills.

USES: Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Verbal is helpful as an alternative to traditional teacher presentation where circumstances warrant or for make-up work when students have missed a lesson. Some exercises do not conform to SAT format, so this resource is best used well in advance of test day. These lessons are also available in a videodisc version.

## Videodiscs

National Association of Secondary School Principals. **IMPROVING COLLEGE ADMISSION TEST SCORES: SAT VERBAL.** 5 videodiscs, student workbook (172 p.), disc/workbook correlations, teacher's manual (105 p.) $800. Info-Disc Corp., 1989.

Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Verbal provides five videodiscs with ten sides that cover the verbal lessons in the student workbook. The videocassette version (see review on page 28) was transferred to videodisc with a chapter arrangement for each lesson to cover an introduction, vocabulary check test, skill development, and the practice exam. The package also includes a student workbook and teacher's manual as well as a content listing of disc sides and chapters with page number correlations for the workbook and teacher's manual.

WEAKNESSES: Legibility is reduced by the use of only uppercase text and by the superimposition of text on pictures, which often produces a cluttered effect.

STRENGTHS: These videodiscs share the strengths of the videocassette version. The chapter summary allows teachers to see lesson structure at a glance. The built-in pauses and access by chapter provide flexibility of use.

USES: Improving College Admission Test Scores: SAT Verbal, while obviously not as portable as the videocassette version, is appropriate in the same types of situations.

# *PSAT*

# *Resources*

## PSAT RESOURCES

These instructional materials focus on preparation for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test. Some of the SAT resources in other categories include sections on the PSAT, provide information that applies to the PSAT, or boost skills that are also tested on the PSAT.

### Activity Cards

**PSAT MATHEMATICS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.** Note: Disseminated by the Mathematics Section, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1989. Distributed to high schools through teachers who attended regional workshops on the SAT.

The PSAT Mathematics Improvement Project is designed for use with students preparing for the PSAT or SAT. Students begin by taking a pretest (the mathematics section of a released PSAT). Diagnostic tests in arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and problem solving can then be taken to ascertain weaknesses in specific areas. Each of the 225 cards in the teacher card file presents a question (with answer and explanation on the reverse side) from a released PSAT or SAT in the areas of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry.

Arranged first by content area, the cards are also subdivided into easy, medium, and hard questions. Cards are coded by color to signify which of five thinking levels is required to answer that particular question, and difficulty and thinking levels are indicated on each card. The guide provides a flow chart showing various options for order of use, thorough description of the package's components, an answer key and score conversion table for the pretest, suggested ways to use the materials, an explanation of the development of the PSAT, an outline of the content tested on the PSAT and SAT, examples and explanations of various types of questions, general information about the PSAT and SAT, and a list of resources as well as copies of the diagnostic tests and answer keys.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: These materials are well thought out and their content clearly explained. Their overall flexibility is well supported by the many suggestions for their use. The diagnostic tests and the efficiently organized cards offer good opportunities to identify and target weaknesses in content knowledge. The student answer keys explain solutions to problems.

USES: The PSAT Mathematics Improvement Project is an effective assessment and content review tool for groups or individuals. Although it could be presented as a self-contained course, one of its most significant features is that it can be used in brief sessions over a long period of time to help provide a solid base of information as well as a familiarity with question types that can promote a peaceful testing experience. Creators of this package suggest beginning its use in grades seven through nine.

Brownstein, Samuel C., et al. **PSAT/NMSQT: HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST/NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST.** 7th ed. 384 p. $9.95 paper. Barron, 1989. (ISBN 0-8120-4191-7)

PSAT/NMSQT: How to Prepare for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is designed to help students perform at a maximum level on the PSAT. It begins with information about the structure and purpose of the test and provides sample questions with answer explanations for each type of test question. Three study programs--two day, two week, and comprehensive (seven or more weeks)--are described with reasonable and appropriate strategies for limited study time. A diagnostic test helps students identify weaknesses, and explanations are given with answers. Detailed description for each type of verbal question is accompanied by suggestions for long-range strategies, tips for answering the questions, practice exercises, an answer key, and answer explanations. A section on building vocabulary includes thirty word lists with etymologies, tests, and answer keys. Suggestions for handling math questions and a study program for math are provided along with review of concepts in basic math, algebra, and geometry. Practice exercises go along with description of some typical test problems in math (e.g., percents, averages, and ratio and proportion). Explanation and practice are also given for quantitative comparison questions. The manual ends with ten simulated, full-length tests and provides answer explanations and scoring charts.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: The detailed description of the different types of questions, answer explanations, helpful tips, and accurate simulation of tests make this a good resource for students anticipating taking the PSAT. Substantial content review will be helpful to many students.

USES: PSAT/NMSQT could be used as a complete text for a PSAT preparation course. Motivated students can also work with it on an individual basis. Teachers may find this manual a helpful source of test questions that require critical thinking skills.

**THE COLLEGE BOARD GUIDE TO PREPARING FOR THE PSAT/NMSQT.** 157 p. $8.95 paper. College Bd., 1988. (ISBN 0-87447-310-1) (Available from Follett Lib. Bk.)

The College Board Guide to Preparing for the PSAT/NMSQT offers realistic advice and practical techniques for doing one's best on the test. The introductory section explores reasons for taking the PSAT and discusses preparation for college (e.g., academics, choosing a college, applying for admission, and figuring out how to pay for college) and provides a list of materials produced by the College Board that discuss those issues in more detail. The book also explains what the test measures and gives test-taking tips. Sample questions along with explanations of each question type are furnished with hints for successful handling of specific question types and

some review of mathematic and geometric concepts. One chapter gives directions for scoring and interpreting the results of the four actual tests included in the book. Each test is followed by further instructions for scoring as well as charts and graphs that help students analyze their test results.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: This guide contains good explanations and samples of question types. The opportunity to take and score actual tests will give valuable experience and information to students anticipating the test. The thorough discussion of test results should not only help students understand the meaning of their scores but also alleviate some anxiety about taking the PSAT.

USES: The College Board Guide to Preparing for the PSAT/NMSQT is especially suitable for individual use and can be worked into a study schedule of most any length. The guide makes the point that no test-taking study can take the place of long-term concentration on academics as a prerequisite for performing well on the test.

Katz, Irvin W., and Melvin L. Silver. **HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE PRELIMINARY SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST (NATIONAL MERIT SCHOLARSHIP QUALIFYING TEST).** 306 p. $7.95 paper. Harcourt, 1981. (ISBN 0-15-600050-4) (Available from Follett Lib. Bk.)

How to Prepare for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) offers a guided program to polish skills and refresh knowledge needed to perform well on the PSAT. The first parts of the book describe the test, explain how to use the book to best advantage, and provide conversion tables, answer sheets for sample tests, and answer analysis sheets. Four sample tests that approximate the PSAT are presented at different points in the book. Also included are in-depth discussions of test-taking tips (both general and specifically directed toward question types), detailed explanations of each question type, and practice exercises that walk students through the answering of each question. Two practice tests familiarize students with techniques for taking the PSAT by presenting answers and explanations for all questions. The book also presents helpful sections for building skills in mathematics and vocabulary.

WEAKNESSES: In the beginning of the book, students are referred to chapter numbers even though the sections of the book are not labeled as chapters.

STRENGTHS: Test-taking tips include advice about dealing with test anxiety and maintaining good physical condition in preparation for the test. Unusual attention is paid to building skills in mathematics.

USES: How to Prepare for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) can be used by students at most levels of academic accomplishment. The skills building sections, for instance, may be unnecessary to the advanced student but a definite advantage to students with weaker skills while the sample tests give better prepared students good practice for the test. The book is designed for individual rather than classroom use.

## Book (Workbook)

Steinberg, Eve P., et al. **PREPARATION FOR THE PSAT/NMSQT.** 5th ed. $9.95 paper. Arco, 1988. (ISBN 0-13-731829-4)

Preparation for the PSAT/NMSQT is an independent study guide that provides review and practice for the questions and problems found on the PSAT. An introductory section describes the test's purpose, format, question types, and scoring. It also explains how to use the book and offers test-taking techniques. Advice on answering all types of verbal questions is given with practice questions, answer keys, and explanatory answers. Math review is offered in the areas of fractions, decimals, percents, powers and roots, measurement, statistics and probability, algebraic expressions, equations and inequalities, and geometry. Practice problems and solutions are included for all math areas. A discussion of quantitative comparisons is also accompanied by practice questions and explanatory answers. Six model exams with score sheets, answer keys, and explanatory answers give students the opportunity to experience a testing situation very similar to the real one.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: Content review, practice exams, and explanatory answers give students a chance to identify weaknesses and improve their test-taking abilities as they work through this study guide.

USES: Preparation for the PSAT/NMSQT is an appropriate workbook for motivated students. It can be used not only as review and practice but also as a diagnostic tool and for planning instruction aimed at SAT preparation.

## Computer Courseware

**TESTSENSE: PREPARING FOR THE PSAT/NMSQT.** 2 program disks, 2 back-up disks, 1 student disk, 25 student manuals 19 p., 25 test booklets 16 p., counselor's manual 11 p. $80. College Bd., 1985. Systems: Apple II family. Equipment required: microcomputer, 1 disk drive, monitor (color preferred), printer (optional)

TestSense: Preparing for the PSAT/NMSQT combines computer activities and printed materials to prepare students for both the verbal and math sections of the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Students use the first disk to receive information about the test (e.g., type and number of questions) along with test-taking tips (about pacing and guessing, for example). After studying the sample questions in the student manual, users take the sample test (an actual PSAT from 1982) following the time guidelines of a regular testing situation. Students then enter their answers on the second disk, and the program computes scaled and percentage scores. With this disk users can also learn how they did on each question, how well they handled different kinds of questions, what they might do to improve their scores, what scores can be expected on the SAT based on PSAT performance, and how the test was scored.

Up to 800 student files can be stored. Users can also print a detailed record of their test scores that shows how many of each question type were right, wrong, or omitted. This record also lists the questions answered wrong, correct test answers, and student answers. The student manual gives reasons for taking the PSAT/NMSQT, the steps involved in using the program, sample screens with explanations, a list of the contents of each disk, test-taking tips, and sample questions and explanations (with special tips for dealing with each type of question). The counselor's manual includes an overview of the program, ways to help students make effective use of the program, suggestions for interpreting the results of the sample test, and an answer key to the sample test.

WEAKNESSES: Some students may wish there were sample problems on the screen in addition to the ones in their manuals.

STRENGTHS: This is a solid introduction to the PSAT/NMSQT with valuable instruction on taking the test and interpreting scores. The detailed breakdown of scores helps students and teachers identify problem areas and weaknesses. Taking the real test included in the package should ease anxiety about surviving the actual experience. Colorful graphics, sound effects, and lively on-screen comments add panache to this reliable, informative package.

USES: TestSense: Preparing for the PSAT/NMSQT is appropriate for all students planning to take that test. Thorough explanations and instructions in the student's manual encourage and facilitate individual use of the program.

# *Miscellaneous Resources*

## MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

Items in this category have specialized emphases such as unusual strategic approaches, reduction of test anxiety, or information about the test.

### Bibliography

**SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TEST: A BIBLIOGRAPHY.** Copies are available upon request from the Education Information Center, Department of Public Instruction.

Scholastic Aptitude Test: A Bibliography is a list of research studies, articles, and other documents pertaining to the SAT that are available in the Education Information Center of the Division of Media and Technology Services. The bibliography has three sections. The first, Improving Test Scores, includes entries relating to the use of computers, thinking skills, and the effectiveness of coaching. The second section covers research on achievement and performance characteristics (e.g., family size, gender, academic preparation, and income). References in the third section, Critical Reviews, focus on issues involved in the use of the test in college admissions and in comparisons by state.

### Books

Cameron, Robert G. **THE COMMON YARDSTICK: A CASE FOR THE SAT.** 26 p. free paper. College Bd., 1989.

The Common Yardstick: A Case for the SAT is a pamphlet prepared by the executive director of Research and Development at the College Board to explain the purpose of the SAT (to predict academic performance in the first year of college) and the research pertaining to it in a framework comprehensible to the nonexpert. The author introduces the SAT as a curriculum-neutral measurement of general abilities that is more useful in college admissions than specialized subject-matter tests or high school records alone would be. The publication presents the benefits of the SAT to high schools (for guidance in choosing colleges and majors), to colleges (for comparing applicants and predicting first-year grade point averages), to states (for analyzing trends over time and providing background information for policy development), and to society (for assessing educational quality at no taxpayer expense). Another section of the pamphlet deals with the measurement characteristics of the test in terms of ethnic minorities, gender, coaching, and choice of questions for the test. The author comments on socioeconomic influences on educational attainment and test scores, elaborates on the predictive validity of the SAT for minority students and women, and makes reference to Guidelines on the Uses of College Board Test Scores and Related Data. The pamphlet explains the College Board's positions that the SAT is coachable only from a test-taking perspective and that the pretesting of questions in the experimental section is essential to their validity. A summary, glossary, and bibliography are also provided.

WEAKNESSES: The author tends to overestimate the benefits of the SAT to the states and society.

STRENGTHS: This publication is an articulate and well-reasoned "position paper" from the College Board about the SAT, with statistical data and implications presented in comprehensible form. Careful readers will gain insight into the original purpose of the SAT and into the controversies surrounding its use.

USES: The Common Yardstick: A Case for the SAT is helpful for guidance counselors, administrators, teachers, and parents who want concise information about the SAT and evidence of its predictive validity.

Divine, James H., and David W. Kylen. **HOW TO BEAT TEST ANXIETY AND SCORE HIGHER ON THE SAT AND ALL OTHER EXAMS.** 180 p. $4.95 paper. Barron, 1982. (ISBN 0-8120-2583-0) (Available from Follett Lib. Bk.)

How to Beat Test Anxiety and Score Higher on the SAT and All Other Exams provides guidance for students who sincerely wish to overcome test anxiety and improve study habits in order to perform better on tests. The book describes the Scholastic Aptitude Test and offers several practical strategies for dealing with the test's questions in the areas of general multiple choice, general math, quantitative comparisons, antonyms, analogies, sentence completions, reading comprehension, and the TSWE. A discussion of test anxiety explains its symptoms and causes and suggests measures to overcome it (e.g., relaxing the body, challenging negative statements about oneself, and desensitizing oneself against particular anxieties). An excellent exploration of effective study techniques and habits includes test preparation tips, directions on how to study, suggestions for mastering various question forms, and a program for enhancing memory. Information about several standardized tests (with addresses and phone numbers for requesting information) and a list of questions to help students decide whether they are ready to take a test complete the book.

WEAKNESSES: Reviewers found no significant weaknesses.

STRENGTHS: The format and content of this book are clear and approachable. Some of the strategies and suggestions found here do not appear elsewhere. The book makes no false promises but instead addresses a very real problem in a straightforward, practical, helpful fashion.

USES: How to Beat Test Anxiety can be used by individuals or small groups who are willing to invest some time and effort in being as psychologically prepared for the SAT (or any other test) as possible. This manual is also a very good source of material on improving study habits as well as test-taking skills.

Gruber, Gary R. **GRUBER'S SUPER DIAGNOSTIC TEST FOR THE SAT: PROGRAMMED TO CRITICAL THINKING STRATEGIES.** 182 p. $7.95 paper. B&N Bks., 1988. (ISBN 0-06-463729-8) (Available from Har-Row)

Gruber's Super Diagnostic Test for the SAT focuses on test taking rather than content. The strategies for verbal and math problems offer a different twist: students answer sample problems, note which one of several strategies that they used to find the answer, and then focus on particular strategies (with practice examples) based on their performance. General strategies (e.g., don't rush, know directions for the different types of problems, and write in your test book), verbal strategies (for antonyms, analogies, sentence completion, and reading comprehension), and math strategies (general and quantitative comparison) are given. Each strategy presentation has examples and practice questions with explanations for both.

WEAKNESSES: Some students may need more practice problems.

STRENGTHS: Strategies are presented in uncluttered form and provide useful models for students to help them focus on clear thinking. Working with this book may reduce test anxiety for students who know the basic content.

USES: Gruber's Super Diagnostic Test for the SAT is appropriate for individual use although it is not a first-choice purchase. Strategies could be presented in small doses as time permits, or a group or class could benefit from exploring differences in initial strategies among group members.

Robinson, Adam, and John Katzman. **THE PRINCETON REVIEW--CRACKING THE SYSTEM: THE SAT & PSAT.** 284 p. $10.95 paper. Villard Bks., 1989. (ISBN 0-679-72633-0) (Available from Follett Lib. Bk.)

The Princeton Review--Cracking the System: The SAT & PSAT focuses largely on strategies designed to help students use the order of difficulty of questions on the test to their advantage and on tactics to eliminate incorrect answers. The book's orientation section introduces basic and advanced principles for "cracking the system" as well as the character Joe Bloggs, a blundering test taker who manages the easy questions but falls for the test designer's distracters on the hard ones. Students see where Joe goes wrong as he approaches each type of test question. Other sections deal with the verbal, math, and Test of Standard Written English portions of the SAT and present brief content review, short drills, and strategies. The vocabulary section provides a "Hit Parade" of SAT-level words with tips on memorization and a list of common word roots and affixes. The final parts of the book offer suggestions for test day, answers to drills, and a diagnostic test with answers.

WEAKNESSES: Parts of the introduction have a negative, cynical tone with overstated expectations for improvement when students use the book (or take the publisher's review course). The diagnostic test has only an answer key rather than explanatory answers.

STRENGTHS: Students who can follow the occasionally intricate reasoning behind some strategies will appreciate the clever, entertaining commentary. The book engages students with humor, iconoclastic statements, role-playing, and acronyms for problem-solving methods. Even though it proposes many "quick fix" strategies, the guide acknowledges the importance of long-term vocabulary building.

USES: The Princeton Review--Cracking the System: The SAT and PSAT is not for the casual user. Students who need content review will not find enough explanation and review here. This guide should be used judiciously and is not appropriate for most marginally prepared students who could misinterpret its tone or assume that guessing can compensate for poor academic skills. Students with strong math and verbal skills are most likely to benefit from this approach although teachers could select and focus on strategies to help all test takers.

Vlk, Ronald G. **CRAM COURSE FOR THE SAT**. 129 p. $4.95 paper. Arco, 1986. (ISBN 0-13-188707-6) (Available from Follett Lib. Bk.)

Cram Course for the SAT outlines a ten-hour overview of or last-minute study plan for the Scholastic Aptitude Test. The suggested schedule requires two hours on each of five days, and the book provides a study calendar for checking off sessions. Students spend one day on an introduction, one day on the verbal question types, two days on math review and practice, and one day on the Test of Standard Written English. Each day's work is divided into one-hour work segments. These segments vary according to content and question type but typically show how questions and answer choices appear on the test, explain how to approach questions and what to do if no answer seems correct, mention common pitfalls to avoid, suggest timesaving tips, and provide a few practice problems with explanatory answers.

WEAKNESSES: Although the title of this item may appeal to teenagers, it reinforces the erroneous notion that last-minute preparation can substitute for solid academic background.

STRENGTHS: This publication does an adequate job of fulfilling its stated purpose of exposing students to the types of questions and general content of the SAT. It is well organized with sensible suggestions that should improve students' test-taking skills.

USES: Cram Course for the SAT, while not a selection for first purchase, could be recommended to individual students who have limited time and need a structured program.

Weiss, John, et al. **STANDING UP TO THE SAT**. 186 p. $6.95 paper. Arco, 1989. (ISBN 0-13-300914-9) (Available from Follett Lib. Bk.)

Standing Up to the SAT approaches the SAT from the consumer advocacy perspective, discussing problems with the test as identified by FairTest, the National Center for Fair & Open Testing, a nonprofit public interest

research organization. The book also presents a program to improve students' test-taking skills. The first chapters of the book criticize the SAT on a number of counts, suggesting biases in the test (e.g., income and race, gender, and language), providing examples of its misuse by colleges and scholarship agencies, proposing an "SAT Bill of Rights," and presenting some colleges' alternatives to the use of the SAT for admission purposes. The authors do advocate preparing for the test but urge caution when dealing with the test preparation industry and offer an eight-point coaching program checklist. The book's self-coaching program has ten steps that cover preliminaries; test construction; how to analyze a practice test (not provided); pacing during the test; guessing; and review of the math, verbal, and Test of Standard Written English sections of the SAT. The final step suggests that students assess progress by taking another practice SAT. The last group of chapters and the appendices deal with fair administration of the test, ethical issues, test challenges, and advocacy issues.

WEAKNESSES: Most students would benefit more from time spent preparing for the test than from informing themselves about its potential biases or inaccuracies. The authors reveal their oversimplification of the educational issues and statistical interpretations of test bias in their debatable assumption that performance differences automatically indicate bias.

STRENGTHS: The book's checklist for evaluating coaching programs provides helpful information for educators who design preparation sessions or for concerned parents. The authors repeatedly emphasize the importance of practicing with actual previously administered Scholastic Aptitude Tests.

USES: Standing Up to the SAT is of interest to guidance counselors and other adults concerned with the larger issues raised by the SAT. It should not be considered a definitive commentary on bias in the SAT. To make the best use of the study program outlined, students need access to previously administered versions of the SAT.

# *Directory of Publishers and Producers*

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